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PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

**DECLARATORY OF THE
PRINCIPLES
OF THE
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,**

AND PROVING THAT

**THE REPEAL
OF THE
CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS,**

WAS EARNESTLY DESIRED BY

KING WILLIAM III. AND KING GEORGE I.

AND ALSO BY

Any respectable Members of the Church of England of high Rank
and Situations, both in Church and State, during their Reigns.

BIRMINGHAM,

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P R E F A C E.

THE late repeated applications of the Protestant Dissenters to parliament for a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, have drawn the attention of the members of the legislature, and of our countrymen at large, as well to the examination of the principles and pleas upon which such applications have been made, as of those political arguments, or more properly political delusions, upon which such applications have hitherto been resisted. Many very judicious publications have been given to the world, which would more than satisfy the doubts and scruples of reasonable men, who sought their conviction from the principles of christianity and protestantism, from the principles of justice and sound policy. But there yet remains among a certain description of men, a tenacious and infatuated adherence to the degrading system of intolerance and suspicion; who while they acknowledge the prostitution of a christian ordinance, converting the commemoration of the death of Christ into a qualification for a civil office,— yet that pure unmixed love for the religion of their Master, which should make them actively anxious to remove the offence; who while they admit the justice of the pretensions of the Protestant

Dissenters, are alarmed by suspicions created in their own prejudiced and deluded imaginations.

It is with a view of removing these groundless prejudices and jealousies, by the exhibition of a series of historic facts, and in opposition to certain assertions made in the House of Commons respecting king William, that the following PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, declaratory of the principles of the Protestant Dissenters, and proving that the repeal of the Corporation and Test acts was earnestly desired by king William III. king George I. and supported by some of the best and greatest characters in this country,—are now collected and published.—They are committed to the press also as authentic chronological testimony of the political and constitutional principles of the Protestant Dissenters from the revolution.

As christians, it becomes our brethren of the establishment, cordially to join in forwarding the application to the legislature for the repeal of the laws in question: as christians they are equally interested in the abolition of every statute that disgraces our common faith in Jesus Christ, as the messenger and prophet of God; and we trust they will at no very distant time be equally desirous to remove so great a scandal and reproach. Although men may *differently* understand several important articles of our holy religion, they ought to have a common desire to support the honour and credit

of those scriptures which they conceive to be of divine original. And as this diversity of judgment is unavoidable among men, it ought not to lead to the breach of charity,—but, on the contrary to promote it, as it gives occasion for the exercise of that mutual love, which is the most engaging part of the christian character. But as in this case, mankind become more and more disposed to allow to others that liberty which they assume to themselves, and thereby preserve charity, good-will, and affection among each other; so the union of assent in acknowledging the religion of the gospel to be a religion from heaven, should, of itself, unite and animate us all alike to protest against any of its institutions being profaned to the secular views of men in this world: in this respect we ought be as much united in removing so obvious and generally acknowledged a scandal from our religious profession, as in cultivating the moral duties of the gospel, or in punishing the notorious breaches of them.

Indeed, it would be unjust and contrary to the truth, to say that churchmen, as such, were now generally disposed to vindicate this imposition of the sacramental test. Many have reprehended it, in the severest terms, and with the greatest force of reason, authority and argument. Hoadley and Sykes were champions of the first name in their day, in this very controversy; and their writings will remain

main unanswered, so long as the laws are unappealed.

It is not necessary here to enter into the defence of those conscientious persons who have refused to comply with the requirements of the law, in this respect; or to apologize for those who have occasionally conformed.—The demand of the state is unreasonable, unjust, and oppressive, in itself, unconnected with every other consideration: it is at the same time, useless, and comes short of answering the pretended end for which it is made.—It is unreasonable, to demand the use of a rite, contrary to, and subversive of, the design of its institution; it is unjust, as by such misuse it tends to exclude conscientious men from offices of trust, whose very integrity should peculiarly recommend them; it is oppressive by reducing the party to the alternative of conforming, at the bidding of the state, or renouncing the trust, because of the test obtruded by those who have no right so to apply an institution designed for a very different purpose; it is useless, as even the compliance with it is no certain evidence that the receivers are even christians, inasmuch as it is notorious, that, induced by the lure of profit or worldly honour, infidels are known to have been partakers of this holy, but much abused rite.

Let us then hope that the day is dawning when the just and equal liberties of Christians, Protestants

and

and Britons, will be confirmed by the authority of a British Parliament: and when the legislature, with a christian and patriot spirit, will repeal every penal law respecting matters of religion, which now remains the reproach of a protestant country. The revolutions on the continent of Europe can never be beheld by us with indifference. Instead of being jealous of the increasing consequence which they will give to neighbouring nations in the scale of power, or envious of their advancement in the enjoyment of intellectual and civil liberty;—it will become us as men, as citizens of the world, and as christians, to rejoice with them: and it will be congenial with the spirit of Britons to emulate that public virtue, which, having borrowed its first light from the British isles, has burned with such lustre, and is likely to be established in such unexampled purity, in the French nation.

The ardent love of liberty has been our characteristic among surrounding nations;—let not the splendour of this noble passion, which has happily been communicated to others, be extinguished in ourselves. The possession of territory is not dependent on our pleasure, but the possession of character is our own, and what we ought to suffer no man to take from us. Civil and religious liberty are equally valuable to every man; they improve and expand his faculties, and rouse him to useful energies.

energies. A crown unconnected with freedom is only the badge of servility, and the humiliation of king and people.

January 9, 1790.

P. S. The documents now published only comprise the period of time from the Revolution to the death of George I. At some future opportunity it is not impossible that they may be continued to the present time.

PUBLIC

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, &c.

*The Speech of King William the Third, on the sixteenth
of March 1688.*

ON the sixteenth of March, 1688, when King William III. went to the house of lords, to give the royal assent to the bills for empowering his majesty to apprehend and detain such persons as he should find just cause to suspect were conspiring against the government, and for annulling Lord Ruffel's attainder, he addressed the following speech to both houses of parliament: 'Now I have the occasion of coming hither to pass this bill, which I hope will be for all our safeties, I shall put you in mind of one thing, which will conduce much to our settlement, as a settlement will to the disappointment of our enemies.

'I am with all the expedition I can, filling up the vacancies that are in offices of trust by this revolution.

'I hope you are sensible there is a necessity of some law to settle the oaths to be taken by all persons to be admitted to such places.

'I recommend it to your care to make a speedy provision for it; and as I doubt not but you will sufficiently provide against Papists, so I hope you will leave room for the admission of all Protestants that are able and willing to serve.

'This conjunction in my service will tend to the better uniting you among yourselves, and the strengthening you against your common adversaries.'

THE

The Lords' Protest, on the twenty-first of March, 1688.

Die Jovis, 21^o Martii, 1688.

THE house having been in consideration of the bill for abrogating the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and establishing others in their place,

A clause for repealing so much of the Test Act as concerns the receiving of the sacrament was read.

And the question being put, whether to agree to the said clause?

It was resolved in the negative.

Leave was given by the house to such lords as will, to enter their dissents, and accordingly these lords following do enter their dissents, for the reasons following:

1st. Because a hearty union among Protestants is a greater security to the church and state than any test that can be invented.

2dly. Because this obligation to receive the sacrament is a test on Protestants rather than on the Papists.

3dly. Because so long as it is continued, there cannot be that hearty and thorough union among Protestants as has always been wished, and is at this time indispensably necessary.

4thly. Because a greater caution ought not to be required from such as are admitted into offices, than from the members of the two houses of parliament, who are not obliged to receive the sacrament to enable them to sit in either house.

NORTH AND GREY, CHESTERFIELD, J. LOVELACE,	DELAMER, GREY, VAUGHAN,	STAMFORD, P. WHARTON,
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Lords'

The Lords' Protest, on the twenty-third of March, 1688.

Die Sabbati 23° Martii, 1688.

HODIE 3a vice lecta est illa, An act for the abrogating of the oaths of supremacy, allegiance, and appointing other oaths.

A rider (in parchment) providing, that no officer shall incur the penalties of the Test Act, in case he shall receive the sacrament in any protestant congregation within a year before or after his admission, was offered and read.

And the question being put, whether this rider shall be made part of the bill?

It was resolved in the negative.

Leave was given to such lords as will, to enter their dissents, and these lords do enter their dissents in the reasons following:

1st. Because it gives great part of the protestant freemen of England reason to complain of inequality and hard usage, when they are excluded from public employments by a law, and also because it deprives the king and kingdom of divers men fit and capable to serve the public in several stations, and that for a mere scruple of conscience, which can by no means render them suspected, much less disaffected, to the government.

2dly. Because his majesty, as the common and indulgent father of his people, having expressed an earnest desire of liberty for tender consciences to his protestant subjects; and my lords, the bishops, having divers of them, on several occasions professed an inclination, and owned the reasonableness of such a christian temper; we apprehend, it will raise suspicions in men's minds of something different from the case of religion or the public, or a design to heal our breaches, when they find by confining secular employments to ecclesiastical conformity, those are shut out from civil affairs, whose doctrine and worship may be tolerated by authority of parliament, there being a bill before us, by order of the house, to that purpose; especially when, without this exclusive rigour, the church is secured in

in all her privileges and preferments, nobody being hereby let into them who is not strictly conformable.

3dly. Because to set marks of distinction and humiliation on any sort of men who have not rendered themselves justly suspected to the government, as it is at all times to be avoided by the makers of just and equitable laws, so may it be particularly of ill effect to the reformed interest at home and abroad, in this present conjuncture, which stands in need of the united hands and hearts of all Protestants, against the open attempts and secret endeavours of a restless party, and a potent neighbour, who is more zealous than Rome itself to plant popery in these kingdoms, and labours with his utmost force, to settle his tyranny upon the ruins of the reformation through all Europe.

4thly. Because it turns the edge of a law (we know not by what fate) upon Protestants and friends to the government, which was intended against Papists, to exclude them from places of trust, as men avowedly dangerous to our religion and government; and thus the taking the sacrament which was enjoined only as a means to discover Papists, is now made a distinguishing duty among Protestants, to weaken the whole by casting off a part of them.

5thly. Because mysteries of religion and divine worship are of divine original, and of a nature so wholly distant from the secular affairs of public society, that they cannot be applied to those ends; and therefore the church by the law of the gospel, as well as common prudence, ought to take care not to offend either tender consciences within itself, or give offence to those without, by mixing their sacred mysteries with secular interests.

6thly. Because we cannot see how it can consist with the law of God, common equity, or the right of any free-born subject, that any one be punished without a crime: if it be a crime not to take the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England, every one ought to be punished for it, which nobody affirms; if it be no crime, those who are capable, and judged fit for employments by the king, ought not to be punished with a law of exclusion, for not doing that which it is no crime to forbear: if it be urged still, as an effectual test to discover and keep out Papists, the taking the sacrament in those protestant congregations

gregations where they are members, and known, will be at least as effectual to that purpose.

OXFORD, R. MONTAGUE,	MORDAUNT, P. WHARTON,	J. LOVELACE, W. PAGET.
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*A Petition from the Common Council of London, June 25,
1689.*

A PETITION from the common council of the city of London was presented to the house of commons praying, that ‘our most gracious sovereign may be freed from all restraints of using his protestant subjects indifferently, in his military or civil services, according to their several qualities and abilities wherewith God Almighty, ‘nature, education and experience have endowed them to that very end, that they might be useful to their king and ‘country, and therein serve God in their generation.’

Archbishop Tennison’s Speech on the Bill against Occasional Conformity, in 1704.

WHEN the bill against occasional conformity was brought into the house of peers (in 1704) for the second time, Dr. Tennison, archbishop of Canterbury made the following speech,

‘The noble peer that spoke last, has considered the reasons that are given for the occasional bill itself, but I must confess I can see none that can satisfy me of the necessity of it; I think the practice of occasional conformity, as used by the Dissenters, so far from deserving the title of a vile hypocrisy, that I think it the duty of all moderate Dissenters upon their own principles to do it. I think that, however it may be disapproved by some rigid Dissenters, it ought to be encouraged by all good Churchmen, as a likely means to bring them over. *The employing persons of a different religion from the established, has been practised in all countries where liberty of conscience has*

' been allowed, That we have gone further already in excluding Dissenters, than any other country has done. That whatever reasons there were to apprehend our religion in danger from the Papists, when the test act was made, yet here does not seem the least danger to it from the Dissenters now. But on the other hand, I can see very plain inconveniences from this bill at present. As it is brought in this last time indeed, they have added a preamble, which though it was put in the first edition of the bill, was left out in the second, viz. *That the act for toleration should be always kept inviolable.* But the toleration act being to take away all the penalties that a man might incur by going to a separate congregation, and the occasional bill being to lay new penalties upon those that do it, how they can say, that this is not, in itself, a violation of the other I cannot very easily comprehend. I doubt it will put people in mind of what passed in France, where every edict against the Protestants began with a protestation that the edict of Nants ought to be always preserved inviolable, till that very edict was in express words repealed.

' At a time that all Europe is engaged in a bloody and expensive war, at a time that this nation has not only such considerable foreign enemies to deal withal, but has a party in her own bowels, ready upon all occasions to bring in a popish pretender, and involve us all in the fame, or rather worse calamities than those from which with so much blood and treasure we have been freed, at a time that the Protestant Dissenters (however they may be in the wrong by separating from us) yet are heartily united with us against the common foes to our religion and government; what advantages those, who are in earnest for defending these things, can have, by lessening the number of such as are firmly united in this common cause, I cannot for my life imagine. Therefore I am for throwing out the bill, without giving it another reading.
Memoirs of the Life of Archbishop Tennison, p. 103.

*The Lords' Protest against the Schism Bill, June 15,
1714.*

Die Martis, 15^o Junii, 1714.

HODIE 3a vice lecta est billa, entitled, An act to prevent the growth of schism, and for the further security of the church of England as by law established.

The question was put, Whether this bill, with the amendments shall pass?

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It was resolved in the affirmative.

Dissentient,

1st. We cannot apprehend (as the bill recites) that great danger may ensue from the Dissenters to the church and state, because,

I. By law, no Dissenter is capable of any station which can be supposed to render him dangerous.

II. And since the several sects of Dissenters differ from each other, as much as they do from the established church, they can never form of themselves a national church, nor have they any temptation to set up any one sect amongst them. For in that case, all that the other sects can expect is only a toleration, which they already enjoy by the indulgence of the state; and therefore it is their interest to support the established church against any other sect that would attempt to destroy it.

2dly. If nevertheless the Dissenters were dangerous, severity is not so proper and effectual a method to reduce them to the church as a charitable indulgence, as is manifest by experience, there having been many more Dissenters reconciled to the church since the act of toleration, than in all the time from the act of uniformity to the time of the said act of toleration, and there is scarce one considerable family in England in communion with the Dissenters: Severity may make men hypocrites, but not converts.

3dly. If severity could be supposed ever to be of use, yet this is not a proper time for it, while we are threatened with

with much greater dangers to our church and nation, against which the Protestant Dissenters have joined, and are still willing to join with us in our defence, and therefore we should not drive them from us by enforcing the laws against them in a matter which, of all others must most sensibly grieve them, that is to say the education of their children, which reduces them to the necessity either of breeding them in a way which they do not approve, or leaving them without instruction.

4thly. This must be the more grievous to the Dissenters, because it was little expected from the members of the established church, after so favourable an indulgence to them, as the Act of Toleration, and the repeated declarations and professions from the throne, and former parliaments, against all persecution, which is the peculiar badge of the Roman church, which avows and practises this doctrine, and yet this has not been retaliated even upon Papists, for all the laws made against them have been the effect and just punishment of the treasons from time to time committed against the state. But it is not pretended that this bill is designed as a punishment of any crime, which the Protestant Dissenters have been guilty of against the civil government, or that they are disaffected to the Protestant succession, as by law established: for in this their zeal is very conspicuous.

5thly. In all the instances of making laws, or of a rigid execution of the laws against Dissenters, it is very remarkable that the design was to weaken the church, and to drive them into one common interest with the Papists, and to join them in measures tending to the destruction of it. These were the measures suggested by popish counsels, to prepare them for the two successive declarations in the time of King Charles II. and the following, issued by King James II. to ruin all our civil and religious rights; and we cannot think that the arts and contrivances of the Papists to subvert our church are proper means to preserve it, especially at a time when we are in more danger of popery, than ever by the designs of the pretender, supported by the mighty power of the French King, who is engaged to extirpate our religion, and by great numbers in this kingdom who are professedly in his interest.

6thly.

6thly. But if the Dissenters should not be provoked by this severity to concur in the destruction of their country and the protestant religion, yet we may justly fear they may be driven by this bill from England, to the great prejudice of our manufactures ; for as we gained them by the persecutions abroad, so we may lose them by the like proceedings at home.

Lastly. The miseries we apprehend here are greatly enhanced by extending this bill to Ireland, where the consequences of it may be fatal, for since the number of Papists in that kingdom far exceeds all the Protestants of all denominations together, and that the Dissenters are to be treated as enemies, or at least, as persons dangerous to that church and state, who have always in all times joined, and would still join with the members of that church in their common defence against the common enemy of their religion ; and since the army there is much reduced, the Protestants, thus unnecessarily divided, seem to us to be exposed to the danger of another massacre, and the Protestant religion in danger of being extirpated.

And we may further fear that the Scotch in Britain, whose national church is Presbyterian, will not so heartily and so zealously join with us in our defence, when they see those of the same nation, the same blood, and the same religion, so hardly treated by us.

And this will still be more grievous to the Protestant Dissenters in Ireland, because whilst the popish priests are registered, and so indulged by law as that they exercise their religion without molestation, the Dissenters are so far from enjoying the like toleration, that the laws are, by this bill, enforced against them.

Somerset,	Bolton,
Dorchester,	Grafton,
Scarborough,	Derby,
Nottingham,	Carlisle,
Haverhill,	Foley,
Hallifax,	Greenwich,
Y. Lincoln,	I. Ely,
Dorset & Middlesex,	T. Wharton,
Sunderland,	Cornwallis,
Rockingham,	Jo. Bangor,
Schamburg & Leinster,	De Longueville,

Torrington,
Devonshire,
Lincoln,
Sommers,
Montagu,
Radnor,
W. Asaph,
Townshend,
Oxford,
J. Landaff,
Cowper.

*The Address of the House of Commons, on the sixteenth
of July, 1715.**

ON the sixteenth of July, 1715, evidence was given in the house of commons of great disorders committed in the county of Stafford, and that several presbyterian meeting houses had been pulled down by a riotous mob, whereupon the house presented the following address to his majesty.

‘ Most gracious sovereign,

‘ We your majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons in parliament assembled, being highly concerned at the continued endeavours of the enemies of your person and government to disturb the tranquility and happiness of your kingdoms, and to deprive your people of the great blessings they enjoy under your auspicious reign, and it having appeared to us, that, by the encouragement, and the false and traitorous insinuations, of persons disaffected to your title and government, great numbers of your poor deluded subjects have been prevailed upon, in many parts of the kingdom, to assemble together, and in a tumultuous and rebellious manner to commit great disorders, and do great injuries to others of their fellow subjects and fellow Protestants, we think it our indispensable duty, on this occasion to express our utmost abhorrence of all such traitorous proceedings, and our highest resentment against the authors and promoters of them, and to renew to your majesty the hearty and vigorous resolutions of your faithful Commons to support your majesty and your government, against all your open and secret enemies, and to contribute the utmost in our power to the honour and safety of your sacred person, and the quiet and security of your government.

‘ And, to that end, we crave leave most humbly to beseech your majesty, that you will be graciously pleased

* Journals of the house of commons, vol. 17. p. 227.

to give directions to the several magistrates throughout your kingdom, that the laws now in force may be put in a speedy, and in the most vigorous execution, against all such persons as shall be found in any way concerned in the rebellious and tumultuous riots and disorders, which have been committed, and are now carrying on, by persons disaffected to your majesty, and your government; and that a strict inquiry may be made to discover the authors and promoters of them, so as they may be brought to condign punishment.

‘ And it being apparent, that the neglect or misbehaviour of many justices of peace, and other magistrates have given great encouragement to the said disorders, we crave leave, in all humility, to beseech your majesty that an account may be taken of such justices of the peace, as have failed in the discharge of their duty on these occasions, and that such of them as shall appear to your majesty to have neglected their duty, may be forthwith put out of the commissions of the peace; and that such other magistrates as shall likewise appear to your majesty to have neglected their duty therein, may be proceeded against with the utmost rigour of the law.’

‘ And as your loyal commons are fully assured, that by the wisdom and steadiness of your administration, the sceptre in your royal hand will soon become a terror to all those, who by open or secret practices shall any way abet the enemies of your person or government, so, from our most dutiful regard to your majesty, and in justice to those of your subjects, who for their zeal and firm adherence to your majesty, and your government, have been sufferers in the said tumultuous and traitorous disorders, we do most humbly beseech your majesty, that you will be most graciously pleased to give directions, that an exact account may be taken of the losses and damages which any of your subjects have sustained by reason of the said tumultuous and rebellious proceedings; and that the sufferers may have full compensation made them for their damages; your faithful commons most humbly assure your majesty, that all expences, which shall be incurred on that account, shall be made good to your majesty out

‘ of the next aids that shall be afterwards granted by parliament :

‘ And, for the security of your sacred person and the quieting the minds of your faithful subjects, we do further most humbly advise your majesty that you will be graciously pleased to give orders, that the magistrates throughout the kingdom, in their several stations do speedily and effectually put the laws in execution against Papists and non-jurors.’

*To which address the king was pleased to return the following answer.**

‘ Gentlemen,

‘ I thank you heartily for your address and the many marks of zeal and affection which you express for my honour and safety, and the security of the kingdom. I will give immediate directions for putting in execution the several matters which you so justly recommend to me. And as I am resolved, on all occasions, to follow the advice of my parliament, so I have no doubt, but that by the blessing of Almighty God, and yourseasonable and vigorous assistance, I shall soon be enabled effectually to suppress that spirit of rebellion which is so industriously fomented among us, and to establish the peace and prosperity of my people.’

The Address of the Dissenting Ministers on the sixteenth of August, 1715.

AUGUST the sixteenth, 1715, a few of the dissenting ministers in and about London and Westminster, in the name of the whole body of the three denominations, waited upon his majesty with the following address :

‘ May it please your majesty,

‘ We your majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects think ourselves obliged in duty and gratitude humbly to

acknowledge that seasonable protection which your majesty has been pleased to give to those of our persuasion, from the late rebellious tumults, and for your gracious answer to the address of your faithful Commons, wherein they desire that a full compensation be made to those whose sufferings they so justly impute to their zeal and firm adherence to your majesty and your government.

' We can assure your majesty, that, no just occasion has been given by us to our fellow subjects for any such treatment, nor can the principles which oblige us to dissent from the church of England, be a reasonable provocation to any who have the least regard to the common rights of mankind, or the rules of the christian religion.

' We desire nothing more than to enjoy our civil rights with a just liberty to profess our own religious sentiments, which we take to be a privilege due to all men. We have been always ready to assist the church of England, in defence of the protestant religion, when in real and imminent danger, being agreed with them and all protestant churches, in those principles that began the reformation, and which alone can justify and support it.

' When there has been a design to introduce popery and arbitrary power, the Protestant Dissenters have been generally first attacked, nor know we any other reason why we have now suffered the outrage of Papists, nonjurors, and other disaffected persons, but that they were sure we were a body of men fixed in our duty to your majesty, and lay the most exposed to popular insults, against which your majesty and your two houses of parliament in your great wisdom and goodness have given us a seasonable, and we hope effectual security for time to come.

' Whilst your majesty's government is disturbed at home, and threatened with an invasion from abroad, we can answer for those of our persuasion, that there are not any of them whose principles and inclinations will not influence to assist and support your majesty, and the protestant religion, to the utmost of their power. We look upon ourselves bound by the strongest ties of duty, gratitude, and interest, to acknowledge and maintain your majesty's undoubted right and title to the imperial crown of these realms,

‘ and to declare our utmost abhorrence of attempts either
 ‘ home or abroad, in favour of a popish pretender. May
 ‘ that gracious providence which has so signally appeared in
 ‘ bringing your majesty to the throne of these kingdoms
 ‘ continue to protect and defend your royal person and
 ‘ family, against all attempts of your open and secret ene-
 ‘ mies.’

*His majesty was pleased to return a most gracious answer
 in these words:*

‘ I am very much concerned at the unchristian and
 ‘ barbarous treatment which those of your persuasion have
 ‘ met with in several parts of my kingdom, and care shall
 ‘ be taken that a full compensation be made to them for
 ‘ their sufferings. I thank you for this dutiful and loyal
 ‘ address, and you may be assured of my protection.’

*The Address of the Dissenting Ministers, on the fourth
 of March, 1717.*

MARCH the fourth, 1717, the dissenting ministers in
 and about London, waited on his majesty in a body
 with the following address; and at their common request
 Dr. Calamy was the presenter of it.

‘ May it please your majesty,

‘ Though we are very ambitious of professing the
 ‘ allegiance and duty we owe to your majesty on every
 ‘ occasion, yet we never make these professions, with greater
 ‘ readiness and alacrity, than when your majesty’s govern-
 ‘ ment is unhappily threatened with any disturbance at
 ‘ home, or from abroad, such occasions giving us the best
 ‘ opportunity to express that zeal and fidelity, by which we
 ‘ are always desirous to be distinguished.

‘ As we offered up our constant prayers to Almighty
 ‘ God, for the safety of your majesty’s person while you
 ‘ were abroad, and have since sent up our most humble
 ‘ thanks, for your majesty’s safe return to these your do-

‘ minions.

minions, so we reckon it our great felicity, among the rest of your faithful subjects, that your majesty is in this your kingdom, before a rebellion concerted between a restless faction, and some foreign ministers was to break out.

We congratulate your majesty with all humility, on the success of your councils abroad, which tends to secure your person and government from the malicious designs of your enemies: and that as your majesty upon visiting your hereditary countries, saw some branches of your royal family in health, so upon your return from them, you found your kingdoms in peace and tranquility, by the prudent administration of his royal highness the prince of Wales under your majesty; and her royal highness the princess recovered from a danger, which gave all your majesty's good subjects, the utmost anxiety and concern.

We take the liberty to return your majesty our most dutiful thanks for the privilege which we enjoy in common with the rest of your subjects under your government, by which the honour, commerce and credit of this nation are so retrieved and improved, and its security so much advanced. And also for the steps which your majesty has been pleased to take towards the repairing the damages which several of our persuasion suffered by the late rebellious tumults, pursuant to the address of the honourable house of Commons, and your majesty's most gracious answser.

We unfeignedly wish your majesty as intire a possession of the hearts of all those of your subjects that have been so unjustly and violently set against you, as your majesty has of the affections of all of our persuasion throughout your dominions. Among us we know not that you have an open, a secret, or suspected enemy, nor any, who, notwithstanding what they have suffered from your majesty's enemies, or the neglect they have hitherto met with from others (for whose sakes, and with whom, they have always been content to suffer) can be brought to the least degree of indifference about any thing that concerns your majesty, your family, or your administration. We reckon it our peculiar glory, that during the late unnatural rebellion, there was not any of our principles, who did not

express the utmost zeal for the suppressing it, in their several stations and capacities.

Your majesty's penetration will, we doubt not, easily lead you to discern, that such a body of your faithful subjects deserve to be distinguished in another manner than by marks of infamy. Their consolation is, that they were put under some of them, for what was hoped at that time would have been for your service. Had your majesty and the nation, found it so, we had been the more easy.

We think it the particular honour of the Protestant Dissenters that their strict adherence to the interest of your illustrious family, before your majesty's accession, and their loyalty to it since, have drawn down upon them so much of the fury of some of their fellow subjects. We are not conscious what else could render us obnoxious to them. Our principles being, as we hope, the most friendly to mankind, and amounting to no more than these of a general toleration to all peaceable subjects*, universal love and charity to all christians, and to act always in matters of religion as God shall give us light into his will about them.

We do not so much as expect or desire any thing that ought to give any one the least disturbance. We only wish that under your majesty, as the common father of all your loyal people, those of our persuasion might not want

* That the liberal principles here laid down were in truth the principles of the Dissenters at the time of presenting this address, as well as at the present day, will appear from the following extract from 'A Plea for the Sacramental Test as a just Security to the Church established, and very conducive to the Welfare of the State,' written by Anthony Ellys, D. D. late lord bishop of St. David's and published in 1736.

— The only material and avowed change of principles that I can find to have been among them (the Protestant Dissenters) seems to be with regard to the toleration of those whom they think to be erroneous in religion: In that point indeed, they no longer adhere to the rigid notions of the ancient sectaries. They have made such public and full declarations for general liberty of judgment, and profession, and for mutual forbearance and christian benevolence. This testimony in favour of the Dissenters ought surely to have weight, for it is the testimony of an enemy, in the very instant of oppressing them. Bishop Sherlock too gives them credit for entertaining the principle here laid down, of being friends to a *general toleration*, but he and they

capacity, as we hope your majesty will find they never want an inclination, to promote the true interest of the protestant religion, and of their country.

‘ May the great God continue to multiply his blessings upon your majesty, and every branch of your royal family: And after you have for many years ruled faithfully for God on earth, may you reign gloriously with him for ever in heaven.’

To which address his majesty was pleased to return a gracious answer in these words.

‘ I thank you for your dutiful and affectionate address. I am fully convinced of the loyalty and zeal of the Protestant Dissenters. I will give order for the speedy payment of the damages they sustained in the late tumults. And they and you shall always have my protection.’

The Address of the Corporation of Wycombe, presented to King George I. in 1717.

‘ WE your majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, beg leave to approach your royal person with hearts full of gratitude to Almighty God, for your majesty’s happy return into your dominions.

‘ The wise and irreproachable conduct of his royal highness the prince of Wales, during your majesty’s absence, had been sufficient to extinguish the spirit of rebellion amongst us, and settling every thing on a sure and lasting foundation, were not the obdurate malice of our enemies such as no

they differ widely as to the meaning of these words. With bishop Sherlock and the high church party toleration is an *indulgence*, which the government may with-hold or modify; with the Protestant Dissenters (as with the great Locke and moderate churchmen) it is a right which the civil magistrate cannot restrain in the smallest degree. This distinction unfortunately still subsists, and has occasioned the present dispute about the repeal of the sacramental test laws.

‘ lenity

‘ lenity can conquer nor reason subdue; which plainly appears by their forming a design to invade us with a foreign power, and make their country a prey to an ambitious cruel enemy, notwithstanding the happiness they might enjoy under your majesty’s most auspicious government, which, like the sun extends its influence alike to the just and unjust, &c.

‘ We doubt not that all Protestants will by the happy influence of your majesty’s administration, be united: and that part of them, who at present, by law are excluded, put upon an equal footing with their fellow subjects: that so the hands of the church of England may be strengthened against the Papists and their wicked adherents.’

The Address of the Inhabitants of Aylesbury, in 1717.

IN an address from the inhabitants of Aylesbury, presented to his majesty king George I. in the year 1717, it is said,

‘ Amongst the many proofs your majesty hath given of your tender love to your people, there is no one hath a juster pretence to the applause and thanks of all, than the appointing his royal highness the prince of Wales to be guardian of the realm in your majesty’s absence, by whose prudence and justice the hopes of our enemies have been disappointed, and the nation settled in a patient and flourishing state, even before the late unnatural rebellion was over in the remotest parts of your majesty’s dominions.

‘ As the uniting the Protestants of these kingdoms would be the most likely way to break the measures, and defeat the councils of our adversaries, so we doubt not but that (when your majesty and the parliament in their great wisdoms shall think proper) all the obstructions (which a great part of our fellow subjects lie under by the malice of a few ill designing men, who cloak their treasons under the specious pretence of zeal for the church) will effectually be removed.’

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The Speech of the Duke of Bolton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to both Houses of Parliament, on the first of July, 1719, and their Addresses.

JULY the first, 1719, the duke of Bolton, lord lieutenant of Ireland, in his speech to the parliament there, had this paragraph :

‘ It is obvious and visible to every considering man, ‘ that a good agreement and union among all Protestants ‘ will greatly contribute to this end,’ (viz. of disappointing the enemies of the government) ‘ and the numbers ‘ as well as strict union of the Papists among themselves, ‘ together with their apparent inclinations and attachment ‘ to the interest of the pretender, seem to make it more ‘ immediately necessary at this time. In what manner a ‘ thing so desirable may be obtained, his majesty leaves to ‘ your consideration, and has commanded me to acquaint ‘ you, that as he has the welfare of the church by law ‘ established under his peculiar care, and resolves always to ‘ support and maintain it, so it would be very pleasing to ‘ him, if any method could be found (not inconsistent ‘ with the security of it) to render the Protestant Dissenters ‘ more useful and capable of serving his majesty, and sup- ‘ porting the Protestant interest, than they now are, they ‘ having upon all occasions given sufficient proofs of their ‘ being well-affected to his majesty’s person and govern- ‘ ment, and to the succession of the crown in his royal ‘ house, and this (says he) I am ordered to lay before you, ‘ as a thing greatly importing his majesty’s service and your ‘ own security.’

The lords in their address upon this speech, said that ‘ As ‘ they took notice of his majesty’s resolution to support and ‘ maintain the church by law established, and his having ‘ the welfare of it under his peculiar care, so did they assure ‘ his majesty, that as that house would always use its utmost ‘ endeavours to support the church as by law established, ‘ so it would take into timely and serious consideration ‘ what might be the most proper method (not inconsistent ‘ with

‘ with the security of the constitution in church and state) ‘ to render all Protestants more useful, and more capable of ‘ supporting the protestant interest than they were.’

The Commons also harmonized, and thanking his majesty for his peculiar care of the church as by law established, they assured him that, ‘ That house would enter into such methods as might render the Protestant Dissenters more useful, and capable of supporting the interests of that kingdom, as far as might be consistent with the peace and security of their present happy constitution in church and state.’ And they soon after passed a bill intituled, An Act for rendering the Protestant Dissenters more useful, and capable of supporting the Protestant Interest of that Kingdom, and for exempting them from certain Penalties to which they were before subject.

In answer to these addresses the lord lieutenant explicitly declared his wishes, that the civil disability inflicted by the Test laws might be removed. In his answer to that of the Irish house of lords, he thus expressed himself. ‘ His majesty hopes that it will not be found inconsistent with the security of the established church, but on the contrary, will be looked upon as a means conducive thereto, to strengthen the protestant interest by rendering numbers of his majesty’s subjects here, who by the legal incapacities they now lie under, are disabled from contributing to its support, more useful to his majesty’s service, and to the preservation of the *constitution both in church and state.*’ And in his answer to the Irish house of commons are these words: ‘ His majesty is glad to find them sensible of the danger of the established church of Ireland from the great number of Papists and other disaffected persons; hoping this consideration will incline them to enter upon such methods, as may make the Protestant Dissenters not only more easy, but more useful to the support of the *constitution both in church and state;* and will prove a great addition of strength to the protestant interest.’

This attempt in Ireland * succeeded no better than that which he had made in England: and after acknowledging

* It was not till the reign of his present majesty, as will be mentioned hereafter, that the Test Act was repealed in Ireland.

the services of the Dissenters in both countries, who had risqued their lives and fortunes in his defence, he had the mortification to be prevented by the test laws from distinguishing them by marks of royal favour.

The Address of the Dissenting Ministers, on the twenty-third of November, 1722.

NOVEMBER the twenty-third, 1722, the following address was presented to his majesty by the dissenting ministers of the three denominations in and about the cities of London and Westminster, with Mr. Matthew Clarke at their head :

‘ May it please your majesty,

‘ We have so often returned thanks to Almighty God for your majesty’s peaceable settlement upon the British throne, and so heartily prayed for the continuance of your happy government, that we must of all people be the most inconsistent with ourselves, if we should not be very sensibly affected with the kindness of Divine Providence, in discovering the vile designs of those, who in defiance of all, even the most sacred engagements, have been, and are still, fighting against their own happiness, and striving to make themselves and the whole nation miserable.

‘ It grieves us that our native country should produce such monsters of ingratitude and perfidiousness. We are at a loss to express how much we abhor their practices. And as for the principles that lead into them, we cannot but account them as foolish, as they are impious.

‘ To imagine that a protestant kingdom should flourish under popish counsels, or our religious and civil liberties be best secured, by sacrificing them to the avowed enemies of both, are absurdities too gross to be digested, by any that know the value of either.

‘ We assure your majesty, that we as ministers of the gospel of peace, are fully determined always to recommend loyalty and fidelity to your majesty and your government,

‘ government, and it is no small satisfaction to us, that we
 ‘ are engaged with a people so well disposed in this respect
 ‘ as the body of Protestant Dissenters: of whom we can
 ‘ with safety declare, that in all parts of the kingdom, they
 ‘ adhere most inviolably to your majesty, as their only
 ‘ rightful and lawful sovereign, and are very sensible of the
 ‘ many blessings of your auspicious reign, which is not only
 ‘ just and equal at home, but glorious abroad, through the
 ‘ tender concern which your majesty upon all occasions is
 ‘ pleased to discover, for the liberties of Europe, and of
 ‘ our protestant brethren in foreign parts.

‘ And we please ourselves with the hopes, that, the
 ‘ restless attempts of a disappointed party, to make their
 ‘ country a scene of blood, by bringing in upon us a
 ‘ popish pretender, will contribute to the fixing your
 ‘ majesty the firmer, if possible upon the throne, and will
 ‘ endear you the more to all your people, and the better
 ‘ secure to them and their posterity, the happy establishment
 ‘ of the protestant succession.

‘ Inclination (great Sir) as well as duty, will lead us to
 ‘ continue our ardent prayers, that your majesty’s invaluable
 ‘ life may be long preserved, that your counsels may
 ‘ be prospered, to the full detection of the traitorous de-
 ‘ signs of your enemies, and the strengthening of our com-
 ‘ mon security, and that the crown may flourish in your
 ‘ majesty’s royal house, in all succeeding ages.’

His majesty made them a gracious answer in these words.

‘ I thank you for this loyal and dutiful address. Your
 ‘ steady and constant adherence and affection to my person
 ‘ and government gives you a most just title to my protec-
 ‘ tion, on which you may always depend.

*The Address of the Dissenting Ministers on the eleventh
of March, 1727.*

MARCH the eleventh, 1727, The protestant dissenting ministers in and about London and Westmister waited on his majesty with the following address, which was presented by the reverend Mr. Joseph Burroughs.

‘ May it please your majesty,

‘ With hearts full of duty and gratitude for the many inestimable blessings we enjoy under your majesty’s wise and gracious government, we beg leave to express our most hearty concurrence with the rest of your loyal subjects, in a just concern and resentment at the attempts of some foreign powers, to violate at once, the rights of your majesty’s crown, and the most valuable interests of your people. Not content with a design to impoverish a rich and flourishing nation, by turning the stream of commerce into another channel, or with the demand of places essential to the security of our trade, acquired in a just war, and ascertained to us by solemn treaties, they would add the worst of mischiefs, the imposition of a popish pretender.

‘ This last insult above all others raises our indignation. If ever God for our sins should suffer that vile project to take effect, it must entirely reverse all the distinguishing advantages procured to these kingdoms by the glorious revolution, and since further secured, with the expence of so much blood and treasure, and deprive late posterity of all the happiness contrived for them by the wise counsels of King William of immortal memory. It must subvert our fundamental laws, which secure the right of your majesty, and of your protestant descendants to reign over Britain, as firmly as they secured to British subjects their private rights. It must therefore inevitably involve us in confusion and ruin. And not affect Britons alone, but the liberties of Europe, and the protestant interest in general. For we are persuaded, the conviction is grow-

‘ ing

ing universal that neither the one nor the other of them
can subsist without the *Protestant Succession*. Though events
are out of all human reach, yet we cannot but hope from
the watchful care of that kind of Providence, which has
been so often excited in our favour, from the justice of
the cause in which we are engaged, from the wise pre-
cautions already taken by your majesty, from the fidelity
and steadiness of your counsels, from the zeal of your
parliament, and from your great and extensive alliance
that such pernicious designs instead of being attended
with success, will be made to issue in the farther establish-
ment of your majesty's throne and the tranquility of your
people.

For this we offer up our hearty prayers to the King of
kings. And we shall not cease to use our best endeavours
to recommend all dutiful and cheerful subjection to your
righteous government, and while we are repeating the
assurances of our inviolable adherence to your majesty
and your royal house, we believe we speak the sense of all
who attend our ministrations, who are zealously devoted
by principle and affection, as well as by interest, to your
person and family.

May your majesty, secure of transmitting your crown
and glory to your royal progeny, and happy in seeing the
confirmed health and prosperity of every branch of your
family, long live the arbiter of Europe, the patron of the
oppressed every where; and the common father of
Protestants: and may yourself enjoy, for many years, the
peace, the blessed consequences of all your royal care
reigning over a people duly sensible of their own felicity
more reformed from public threatening vices; and more
united than ever, in piety to God, in loyalty to the
prince, in liberty to serve their country, and in mutual
affection to one another.

His majesty was pleased to return a gracious answer to these words, 'I thank you for this dutiful and loyal address. This seasonable instance of your zeal for my person and government, cannot but be very acceptable to me; you may depend upon my continued protection.'